



16 March — 1 May 1983

REFLECTIONS OF REALITY IN JAPANESE ART

The Cleveland Museum of Art
11150 East Boulevard
Cleveland, Ohio 44106
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FACT SHEET

For release on receipt

Exhibition: REFLECTIONS OF REALITY IN JAPANESE ART

Dates: March 16-May 1, 1983

Description: This is the first exhibition to focus on the realist tradition in Japanese art. It presents the frank and vivid record that Japanese artists have made of the people and places important to them and of their amusement, not always sympathetic, at human foibles. The exhibition comprises nearly 140 rare and significant paintings and sculptures, about three-quarters from Japan, including nine National Treasures and more than fifty Important Cultural Properties from major temples, shrines, museums, and private collections.

REFLECTIONS OF REALITY is a companion and counterpoint to a 1961 exhibition, Japanese Decorative Style. These two modes, the decorative and the realistic, constitute a dualism that is an outstanding characteristic of Japanese culture. The exhibition will be shown only at The Cleveland Museum of Art.

Organizer: Sherman E. Lee, director and chief curator of Oriental art at The Cleveland Museum of Art for twenty-five years, sums up a lifetime of studying Japanese art and culture in this exhibition, which he has been planning since his earlier exhibition on Japanese Decorative Style. With the generous collaboration and support of the Agency for Cultural Affairs (Bunka-cho) of the Government of Japan and The Japan Foundation, Dr. Lee has selected choice works for this show, his final exhibition before he retires in July 1983.

Contents: Works of art in the exhibition range from a few early representational ceramic wares to late nineteenth-century paintings. All illuminate Dr. Lee's conviction that Japanese realism is unique, an old and abiding tradition in Japanese art.

Among the paintings designated National Treasures are two landmarks in the development of the narrative handscroll, one of the Choju-giga scrolls of the Kamakura Period (1185-1333) and the Kokawa-dera Engi, dated about 1180. Another National Treasure is one roll of the Ippen Shonin E-den, dated 1299, a record of the life of the charismatic monk Ippen.

Of the wooden sculpture and masks in the exhibition, the portrait sculptures constitute the most significant group ever to come to the United States. Chief among them are those of Hojo Tokiyori, the famous military regent in Kamakura; Buttsu Zenji, abbot of Tofuku-ji, Kyoto; Priest Kuya, early evangelist of popular Buddhism; and Priest Chogen, who in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries traveled throughout Japan to raise funds to rebuild the venerated Todai-ji after it was destroyed by fire.

Lenders:

Exhibition lenders include Tokyo National Museum, Kyoto National Museum, Nara National Museum, Idemitsu Museum, Fukuoka Museum, and Atami Museum, and important temples and shrines in Japan, among them Kokawa-dera, Wakayama; Kozan-ji, one of medieval Buddhism's centers, and Daihoon-ji, Kyoto; Todai-ji and Toshodai-ji, Nara. A few significant works from the Art Institute of Chicago, the Seattle Art Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and the collection of John and Kimiko Powers, will be included, with twenty paintings and sculptures from The Cleveland Museum of Art, which has one of the finest collections of Japanese art outside Japan.

Catalogue:

Every object in the exhibition will be reproduced, in whole or in part, in the 350-page catalogue. It includes 16 color plates and 170 black and white photographs. The text is by Sherman E. Lee, catalogue entries by Michael Cunningham with James Ulak. The cloth-bound book (SBN 0910386-70-6, 7½ x 10 inches) is published by The Cleveland Museum of Art and will be distributed by Indiana University Press.

Supporting
Exhibition:

JAPANESE PRINTS: REALITIES OF THE "FLOATING WORLD" presents about forty prints from The Cleveland Museum of Art and several major American museums, as well as from the private collections of Herbert R. Cole and Kelvin Smith. The prints chronicle the life that centered around the Kabuki theatre and the Yoshiwara, or licensed brothel district, of eighteenth-century Edo (modern Tokyo). Marjorie Williams, associate curator in the Department of Art History and Education, organized the exhibition and wrote the accompanying catalogue. A series of lectures by Sherman E. Lee and Roger Keyes on Japanese prints is scheduled.

Hours: Regular Museum hours will be observed, with exceptions noted under Lectures: Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, 10 to 6; Wednesday, 10 to 10; Saturday, 9 to 5; Sunday, 1 to 6. The Museum is closed on Mondays.

Free Public Lectures: Sherman E. Lee: Reflections of Reality in Japanese Art
Sunday, March 27, 3:30 pm

*Sherman E. Lee: E-maki--Well Told Tales
Tuesday, April 5, 8:30 pm

John Rosenfield: Priest Chōgen and the Revival of Realism in Medieval Sculpture
Wednesday, April 6, 4:30 pm

*Calvin French: Western Influence in Japanese Painting During the Edo Period
Thursday, April 7, 8:30 pm

Donald Richie: Realism in the Japanese Film
Sunday, April 10, 4:00 pm

Michael Cunningham: Portraiture in Japanese Art
Sunday, April 17, 3:30 pm

Audie E. Bock: Beauty Isn't Always Pretty--The Films of Mikio Naruse
Wednesday, April 20, 7:00 pm

*Both special exhibitions will be open from 7:00 to 10:00 pm to accommodate visitors attending these lectures.

Free Film Series: Sixteen films will be presented in this series, Realism in the Japanese Film. They will be shown in the Museum's Gartner Auditorium, generally on Wednesdays at 7:30 pm and on Saturdays at 2:30 pm.

Other Free Lecture, Film, and Educational Programs: Throughout the six weeks of the exhibition, the Museum will present gallery talks, courses, musical performances, art films, slide-tapes, workshops for teachers, and gallery tours.

Funders: In addition to collaboration and support by the Agency for Cultural Affairs (Bunka-chō) of the Government of Japan and The Japan Foundation, The Cleveland Museum of Art has had the generous support of the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities under the Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Act,

the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ohio Arts Council, the Japan-United States Friendship Commission, and the Asian Cultural Council.

Please note:

To protect their delicate surfaces of silk and paper, paintings will be rotated midway through the exhibition, according to Japanese practice. Between the closing of the galleries at 6 pm on April 10 and their reopening on April 12, all handscrolls will be re-rolled to reveal different scenes, and some hanging scrolls and screens will be replaced by alternates.

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For additional information, photographs, color transparencies, please contact the Public Information Office, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106; 216/421-7340.